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ABSTRACT

Heads of special collections of pulp magazines, the medium for popular fiction prior to the introduction of mass market paperbacks in 1939, were surveyed to help analyze and address the problems facing these collections. A survey mailed to special collections administrators gathered background information from the four largest collections (University of California at Los Angeles, Library of Congress, University of Louisville, and San Francisco Academy of Comic Art) as well as from heads of collections at 12 other universities and 1 public library. Science fiction, detective fiction, and hero pulps are identified as the three genres of main pulp interest. Characteristics and histories of the pulp collections are noted, problems are identified, and remedies are suggested. A list of references is included. (THC)

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Problems in Pulps:
A Study of Special Collections in Pulp Magazines

by

George Tuttle

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PROBLEMS IN PULPS:
A STUDY OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS IN PULP MAGAZINES

by George Tuttle

The objective of this study is to help fill the information void on pulp special collections, to analyze the extent of problems involved with these collections, and to receive input from heads of collections on how libraries should address these problems. Research for this study started with a search of the literature for articles dealing with pulp special collections. Outside of a few articles that provide physical descriptions of existing collections, there is little available information on this topic. The exception to this is an article written by Bill Blackbeard for the Handbook of American Popular Culture.[1] The article entitled "The Pulps" reviews the nature of pulp magazines, research in the pulps, and the problems faced by pulp researchers in using a library's pulp collection. Though this article is rather limited in its discussion of pulp special collections, it was a good starting point for this study.

Yet because of the limited information on pulp special collections in the literature, it was necessary to gather further data. A survey of heads of special collections, which included pulp collections, was the means used to obtain the data. The names

and addresses of heads of special collections were taken from Lee Ash's Subject Collections, the 7th edition of the Directory of Special Libraries and Information Centers, and an article by Elizabeth Cummins Cogell entitled "Science Fiction and Fantasy Collections in U.S. and Canadian Libraries."[2] The study obtained responses from the four largest pulp special collections, the collections at the University of California at Los Angeles, Library of Congress, University of Louisville, and San Francisco Academy of Comic Art and from heads of special collections from the following institutions: Bowling Green State University, Brigham Young University, Denver Public Library, East Carolina University, Eastern New Mexico University, Indiana University, University of Montana, University of New Brunswick, Northern Illinois University, Pennsylvania State University, Queen's University, Temple University, and Texas A&M University.[3] The objective of the survey was to gather background information on individual collections and views on the problems facing pulp collections. All surveys, with two exceptions, were conducted through the mails. The exception were the interview with William Dubois, Northern Illinois University's Rare Book/Specail Collections Librarian and Bill Blackbeard, Director of the San Francisco Academy of Comic Art. Input from the heads of all these collections was essential in completing this study.

The Pulp Magazine and Pulp Research

Prior to 1939, mass-market paperbacks did not exist. The pulp magazine was the medium for popular fiction. Detective fiction, Westerns, love stories, and other action and adventure genres could be found in abundance in these magazines. They crowded the newsstands and provided thousands of writers with a forum for expression and millions of readers with a means of entertainment. In 1935, during the pulp's heyday, pulp publisher A.A. Wyn estimated that 125 of these magazines were published each month for a reading audience of 30 million Americans.[4]

In his article Bill Blackbeard provided the following description of a pulp:

> A specific, readily defined kind of periodical, found only in six sizes and forms, all of which share in common wood-pulp paper and a two column text. The most frequently encountered form of pulp magazine is a sheaf of several octavo signatures, stapled together at two equidistant points near the spine, enclosed with a slick paper cover attached with glue over the flat area of the spine, and usually featuring interior illustrations, as well as color printing on the outside of the cover. This basic form of pulp magazine is found in three sizes: the large "flat" of about 8½ X 11", usually about ¼ to 1 inch thick with trimmed page edges, and composed of three to four signatures (or, very occasionally, perfectly bound, with or without staples); the median, standard size (representing the vast majority of all pulps) of 10" X 7" untrimmed, or about 9" X 6½" trimmed, averaging 1/3 to ½ inch in thickness (some exceptional pulps of this size can go to two inches or more of thickness), made up of six to twelve signatures (or again, in rare instances, dozens of signatures); and the "digest" size, of about 7½" X 5", ¼ to ½ inch thick (with some rare titles reaching an inch or more), almost always trimmed, and involving six to eight signatures (or perfectly bound, with or without staples). A much less frequent form of pulp magazine is the saddle-stitched, single signature variety.[5]

They were called "pulps" because of the wood-pulp paper they were

printed on. They were also commonly referred to as all-fiction magazines because, unlike magazines like Saturday Evening Post, Harper's, and Collier's, they consisted entirely or almost entirely of fiction.

Publishing giant Frank A. Munsey created the pulp magazine in 1896, with his magazine Argosy. Following his success, other all-fiction magazines began to appear. Most of these early pulp magazines published all types of fiction and did not specialize in one genre. But this situation began to change in 1915, when Street&Smith released a pulp specializing in detective fiction. The magazine, Detective Story Magazine was an instant success and in years to follow more specialized pulps appeared on the newsstands.[6] In 1919, Western Story Magazine, the first Western pulp, appeared, in 1921, Love Story Magazine, the first love story pulp, debuted, and in 1926, Amazing Stories, the first science fiction pulp, hit the scene. Specialized pulps helped fuel a boom in the pulp industry. The pulp market grew steadily during the 1920's, peaked in the 1930's, and may have continued to grow during the 1940's if two events had not occurred. The first event was World War II and the paper shortage that came with the war. This occurance weakened the industry. The second event was the paperback. Paperbacks were an alternative for both writers and readers, and they significantly cut into pulp sales. As paperbacks became more popular, pulps died off. By the early 1950's, most of the popular pulp titles of the 30's and 40's were no longer

being published. But the end of the pulp magazine era did not mean an end to the interest in pulps and pulp fiction.

In 1928, pulp editor and publisher Harold Hersey predicted, "the scholars will dig in musty, yellow pulp-paper magazines," and today, they do dig.[7] Research in the pulps is alive and growing -- not in leaps and bounds, but there is a steady flow of literature on the pulps. Interest in pulp magazines exists in two different forms: academic and non-academic. The non-academic interest is commonly referred to as the fandom. The term "fandom" implies not just an interest, but an admiration, and though the non-academic interest is usually not as objective as academic interest, it still can be as scholarly. Many of the best works on pulp magazines come from the non-academic side of the fence. The non-academic interest has been around longer and is more fully developed. The academic interest has only seriously existed since the 1960's. But as popular fiction becomes more accepted on the academic level, academic publications on pulps and pulp fiction become more common.

In studying research in the pulps, one must remember that the pulp magazine is just a medium. Most of those doing research in the pulps are not interested in the medium as much as they are interested in the material the medium is a vehical for. This interest is usually limited to genres of fiction. In the case of pulps, most research is done in three areas: science fiction pulps, detective fiction pulps, and hero pulps.

Interest in science fiction pulps is no doubt the most wide spread. This interest is reflected in the fact that most pulp special collections are science fiction collections. Interest in science fiction pulps is high because of the important role the pulp medium played in the development of this genre. The term "science fiction" was coined in the pulps. Anyone interested in studying science fiction of the 20's, 30's, or 40's must study the pulps or works dealing with pulp literature because the pulps during these years were the main medium for this genre.

Interest in detective fiction pulps is not quite as profound, but is definitely exists. Most of the interest revolves around the hardboiled school of detective fiction. This sub-genre of detective fiction was founded in the pulp magazine Black Mask. Because the pulps were the main medium for this sub-genre during its early years, pulp magazines are of interest to researchers studying this major movement in the detective fiction genre.

Hero pulps were pulp magazines center around one central character, a character who usually has some sort of exceptional skill or strength that sets him above other humans. The Shadow, Doc Savage, The Avenger, The Spider, Captain Future, and G-8 and His Battle Aces are examples of hero pulps. Though the hero pulps have an enthusiastic non-academic following, the academic interest is quite limited. But even in academia, many recognize the influence

the hero pulps had on popular culture and show interest in studying these pulps.

Interest in pulps outside these three areas is hardly worth mentioning. It exists, but it is unorganized and irregular, and produces only a small amount of literature. This is a shame, because there is still a large quantity of quality literature yet unstudied in the pulps. Western fiction, romance fiction, aviation fiction, and other genres of pulp fiction are left unnoticed by researchers. It is a regrettable situation.

Pulp Special Collections

For the purpose of this paper, a pulp magazine special collection is any collection that meets the criterion of a special collection ("A collection of books . . . on a certain subject or period, or gathered for some particular reason in a library which is general in character")[8] and that consists entirely of pulp magazines or contains a significant number of pulps. The collection that consists entirely of pulps is a true pulp special collection. Collections of this type can be cross-genre or limited to the same genre. The collection that consists only partially of pulps can fall into many categories. Genre-oriented collections and author-oriented collections are examples of two types of special collections that might include pulp magazines. A genre-oriented collection is a special collection limited to one genre. Some science fiction collections contain large numbers of pulps. These collections are not real pulp special collections because they contain non-pulp material. Likewise, author-oriented collections, special collections limited to one author, but include pulps as examples of the authors published works, are not real pulp special collections. Yet I have included these types of special collections in this study because these collections contain large numbers of pulp magazines and must deal with the problems that confront any large collection of pulp magazines.

Pulps have been in the library long before pulp special collections. The Union List of Serials provides listing for many

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pulp titles, most held by public libraries, most purchased soley because of their entertainment value. But the pulp special collection is a relatively new phenomenon. Most collections sprang up during the late 60's and early 70's. It is difficult to pinpoint the date of the first pulp special collection, or to be positive which library had the first collection of this type. That information is just not readily available.

The best source of information on pulp collections is Lee Ash's Subject Collections. In this book, special collections of various types are arranged under subject headings. Listings for pulp collections can be found under the heading "Pulp Magazines," as well as under the heading of a particular genre like "Science Fiction," "Fantastic Fiction," and "Fiction, 'Western'." This book will give the names and addresses of libraries with pulp collections, and provide short descriptions of the collection. Subject Collections does not provide a wealth of information on individual collection, but it is a starting place.

For information on science fiction pulp collections, the best source is an article by Elizabeth Cummins Cogell entitled "Science Fiction and Fantasy Collections in U.S. and Canadian Libraries." This work provides a list of special collections in science fiction that gives names and addresses and a detailed description of the collection, plus states if pulp magazines are included in the collection and if so which titles and if the runs of these titles are complete. Though some of the information describing pulp holdings is not always 100% accurate, this work is still a godsend to the science fiction pulp researcher since it acts as a union

list for science fiction pulps.

These two works are the main sources of information for finding pulp collections. But even combined, they do not list every pulp special collection. Blackbeard's article provides the names of two libraries not listed in the above works, and E.R. Hagemann's A Comprehensive Index to Black Mask, 1920-1951 mentions another collection elsewhere uncited. No doubt, there are other collections that this study was unable to uncover, but the major collections tend to be well publicized in pulp circles and are not hard to locate. The following is a short description of existing pulp special collections.

The University of California at Los Angeles has one of the largest and oldest collections of pulps. The collection was founded in the late 1950's by Wilbur J. Smith on the suggestion of two English professors, Philip Durham and E.R. Hagemann, who both had an interest in hardboiled detective fiction. Though the collection includes pulps of various genres, it is centered around a large collection of Black Mask, the most famous pulp of the detective fiction genre. In 1967, Wilbur Smith reported that the pulp collection consisted of 400 titles and 12,500 separate issues, but the collection has grown since then.[9] Wilbur Smith is now retired. Hilda Bohem is now in charge of the collection.

Because of the Library of Congress' status as a copyright deposit, this library has accumulated a large number of pulps of various genres. But despite the copyright deposit status,

the collection has large gaps. The collection is housed in two different divisions. Important pulp titles (Black Mask, Weird Tales, and Amazing Stories) are kept in the Rare Book and Special Collections Division. The rest of the collection is housed at the Serial and Government Publications Division. The collection consists of 15,000 issues and 300 titles, with a few titles on microfilm. Those interested in information on the pulp collection should contact the Head, Reference and Reader Services at the Rare Book and Special Collection Division.

After E.R. Hagermann taught at UCLA, he moved to a position at the University of Louisville. He is undoubtedly one of the reasons for the pulp collection at Louisville. The University of Louisville has over 10,000 issues, most of them duplicates from UCLA. On top of UCLA's contribution, George McWhorter, Curator, Rare Books, University of Louisville Library donated a number of pulps and other materials relating to the career of Edgar Rice Burroughs from his personal collection. Louisville's collection of pulps is a cross-genre collection and was founded in the early 1970's. It has a bright future because of McWhorter, Hagermann, and others at Louisville who has a keen interest in preserving and improving the collection, and its future will be even more bright if the Library of Congress goes through with a plan to send a large number of their pulps to the University of Louisville. It seems that the Library of Congress does not have the resources to take proper care of all the pulps in their

possession. The University of Louisville, on the other hand, is glad to enlarge their collection.

The finest cross-genre collection of pulps in a library can be found at the San Francisco Academy of Comic Art. This collection consists of "key or first issue examples of virtually every pulp, as well as many complete runs of titles in all pulp areas."[10] The collection is strong in the areas of detective and science fiction and in other areas, like hero pulps, where other collections are weak. The Academy will provide copies of any materials in their collection. The library's director Bill Blackbeard has also devised a method of producing pulp facsimiles at the price of about twelve dollars an issue. Therefore, the collection is accessible to those not able to come to San Francisco. The San Francisco Academy of Comic Art is a special library dedicated to preserving and collecting materials relating to the popular narrative arts -- this includes the graphic arts (comic books and comic strips), the performing arts (film and television), and the written arts (pulp magazines and paperbacks). The library has a firm interest in pulps,and the library's staff is very knowledgeable about the medium.

There are seven other important cross-genre collections. Brigham Young University has a good collection of pulps, mostly detective and science fiction, from the 1940's and 1950's. Syracuse University has a large collection of Street & Smith pulps on microfilm. Since Street & Smith was a major publisher of pulps,

this is an impressive collection. University of Minnesota has a fair collection of early general fiction pulps that includes Argosy, 1888 to 1935, and Popular Magazine, 1905 to 1931. Michigan State University and Bowling Green State University have similar collections. Both collections are representative samples of the medium and are intended to compliment other popular culture collections in the libraries. Harvard University and the British Library are both supposed to have large pulp collections, but there are no detailed descriptions of these colllections and little is known about them.

There are a number of libraries with science fiction pulp collections and science fiction collections that include pulps. University of Arizona, Texas A&M University, Eastern New Mexico University, Northern Illinois University, University of Maryland, San Francisco Public Library, Ohio State University, Brown University, Pennsylvania State University, Indiana University, Temple University, University of Kansas, University of Wisconsin, East Carolina University, University of Texas, and University of California at Riverside all boast of having large science fiction pulp collections. Florida International University and University of Montana have large numbers of science fiction pulps on microfilm. Three Canadian libraries have fine science fiction pulp collections: University of New Brunswick, Queen's University, and University of Winnipeg. Many of the libraries listed above also have non-science fiction pulps. For example, Northern Illinois University has a sample collection of Western pulps; Texas A&M and Eastern New Mexico Universities have collections of general

fiction pulps.

There are a number of collections limited to science fiction pulps, but there is only one single genre collection of non-science fiction pulps. This is the Western pulp collection at the Denver Public Library. This collection includes a complete run of Western Story Magazine and examples of a number of other Western pulp titles. Colorado State University also used to have a Western pulp collection, but donated their collection to the Denver Public Library.

A number of libraries have author-oriented special collections with pulps included. The State Historical Society of Wisconsin's August Derleth collection is one of the best known examples. However collections of this type have limited potential for pulp research, due to the fact that these collections tend to be restricted to pulps the author appeared in.

The goal of a pulp special collection is similar to the goal of any special collection: perservation, exhibition, and research. In the case of the university libraries, collections are there to support the curriculum. A pulp special collection provides users with a unique source of information. It acts as a record of American popular culture, aiding those doing research in science fiction, detective fiction, and other genres of literature and also acts as general record of popular culture for those who just wish to inspect the artwork, ads, and the overall package that makes up a pulp magazine.

Problems

In his article, Blackbeard points out five problems that can confront those using a pulp special collection. The first is the lack of a comprehensive pulp collection. In the words of Blackbeard:

> No comprehensive pulp collection exists . . . all suffer frequent and wide gaps in various areas. The researcher may well have to go to a number of widely separated institutions in order to locate a given group of titles and dates, and even then there may be some he will not be able to find. Science fiction pulp collections tend to be the most complete.[11]

The problem is a significant one, especially for libraries with non-science fiction collections. There are comprehensive collections of science fiction pulps, but there are no comprehensive collections of detective, Western, romance, sports, aviation, or general adventure pulps in either the private sector or in a library. There are reasons for this phenomenon. First, there were only a fraction of science fiction pulps produced compared to the number of pulps from other genres.For example, in 1936, there were four science fiction pulps being published. Meanwhile, there were thirty-one detective pulps and thirty-seven Western pulp magazines.[12] Science fiction was a late bloomer. The genre did not start becoming really popular until the 1940's and 1950's, when the pulp industry started to fail. The second reason is the science fiction fandom. Though science fiction did not have a large following, it did have a dedicated one. Science fiction fans were early to recognize the

contribution of pulps to the genre. Hence, as far back as the 1930's, fans were making serious attempts to collect and preserve science fiction pulps. Because of the efforts, a number of private collections exist, and to the good fortune of pulp special collections, many private collections have been donated to libraries.

Though the problem is not as bad for science fiction pulp collections, it is there, especially for libraries that do not share the good fortune of having a complete collection donated to them. Pulps are expensive. Buying a complete run of a title or filling gaps can be costly, and since pulp special collections are not a priority item at most libraries, the institution cannot justify the expense and the collection must remain incomplete. In case of non-science fiction pulps, the problem is even more complex. Incredible numbers of pulps were produced. At the time they were produced, few attempts were made to preserve them. At the time few saw the research potential of these magazines.

The second problem cited by Blackbeard is the lack of accessibility to the pulps in some collections. This problem is not that significant because of the fact that the problem is limited to one library. The main reason Blackbeard cites this problem is to warn researchers who are planning to use the pulp collection at the Library of Congress. Because of space problems, the Library of Congress is unable to store most of their pulps at a readily accessible location. It often takes one or two days for pulps to be located and brought to the main library for use. Of course, pulps

are rare books, so access is quite often limited regardless of the library, but these access limitations hardly compare to the access problem at the Library of Congress.

The third problem involves the deteriorating condition of some pulp magazines. Because of wood pulp paper's high acid content, the pages of pulps become yellow and brittle when subjected to long periods of heat and light. Though collections heads do what they can to maintain the condition of the collection, quite often there is little they can do. Pulps obtained by libraries are sometimes already in bad condition, plus use by patrons only adds to the problem. In response to a question on the problems facing pulps, Peter VanWingen of the Library of Congress pointed out that "unlike dime novels which get heavy use for their cover art, pulps are looked at from cover to cover." Aging pulp paper and cover to cover use is a deadly combination for the pulp magazine. This problem is often cited by the heads of collections as the chief problem facing pulp special collections. This problem is critical because it both impedes use while threatening the maintainence of the collection.

The fourth problem is xeroxing. Researchers often need copies of stories from pulp magazines, and Blackbeard suggests:

> Since reproductive equipment can vary greatly in quality from place to place, it will be wise to sample this by making some few copies of pulp material on the premises, although more and more institutions are acquiring fine reproductive equipment which will provide stunning copies.[13]

But this aspect of the problem is not that significant since even when poor reproduction equipment is used, the copy is rarely unreadable. Instead, the major problem involving xeroxing is not the question of whether the library can produce stunning copies, but if the library will make copies at all. Some libraries do not allow photocopying of pulp magazines because of the fragile nature of the material. This can be a major stumbling block for the researcher, especially for the researcher who lives too far to go to the library in person and wishes to request copies of stories through the mails. UCLA is one institution that does not allow xeroxing, yet they are constantly bombarded with requests to xerox, which they must regretfully turn down.

The fifth problem is the lack of reference tool at libraries with pulp collections. As Blackbeard points out:

> The fact that a library holds a large, donated pulp collection (almost no institution has actually built its own collection from scratch) is no guarantee it will own many specialized reference books in the field - or, indeed, that any of the institution staff will themselves have much knowledge of, or interest in their pulp holdings.[14]

Most libraries with large collections get the needed reference materials. It is just common sense on the librarian's part. But even if the collection has all the available reference works on pulps, he is confronted by another problem, the overall lack of reference tools. The main source of access to a pulp collection is a pulp magazine index. Unfortunately, there is no overall index to pulp fiction. What does exist are the following: Index to the Science Fiction Magazines: 1926-1950 by Donald B. Day (indexes all science fiction pulps except science fantasy pulps like Weird Tales), Index to the Weird Fiction Magazine by Thomas G.L. Cockcroft

(indexes Weird Tales and other science fantasy pulps), The Hero Pulp Index by Robert Weinberg and Lohr McKinstrey (indexes the hero pulps), A Comprehensive Index to Black Mask, 1920-1951 by E.R. Hagemann (indexes Black Mask magazine), Monthly Murders by Michael Cook (indexes digest-size mystery magazines), and UCLA has indexes to Adventure Magazine, Blue Book, and Western Story Magazines all compiled by William J. Clark (these indexes have yet to be published or distributed widely). As one can see, science fiction and hero fiction pulps are well indexed, but other genres are not. Other reference tools like histories and commentaries are also limited in their coverage. Outside the area of science fiction, detective fiction, and the hero pulps, there is little material. But even in an area where indexes and other reference materials are plentiful like science fiction pulps, there is a need for more works and revisions on present works. These additional works would not just be useful to pulp researchers, but also to librarians addressing reference questions about pulp magazines.

Besides problems in using collections, there are other problems that plague pulps and that make it even more difficult to remedy the problems listed above. First, pulps are a low priority item at most institutions. This means that the money and time that can be spent on these magazines is extremely limited. Second, some heads of collections know little about pulp magazines or the resources available that could help improve a pulp collection. Finally,

most pulp researchers and those interested in pulps have done little to help librarians to improve existing pulp special collections. Most sit on the sidelines expecting these collections to improve on their own.

How could pulp special collections as a whole be improved? Heads of collections were surveyed, and from these responses, a number of suggestions were made. From Evron Collins of Bowling Green State University:

> Some preservation needs to be undertaken. Perhaps various collections should be responsible for specific titles and should film and preserve this title which could then be available to other collections.

The idea of microfilming was also echoed by William Morley of Queen's University:

> I think a co-ordinated programme of placing pulps on microfilm or microfiche, even at the loss of the original from the wear of filming, could be helpful. Each library might contribute a title or two to the cause, in exchange for a copy of the film. Other libraries would purchase, to pay for project costs.

From George McWhorter of the University of Louisville:

> A central index for repository information (which libraries have which pulps) . . . could probably help the cause tremendously, and provide researchers with much more accurate information than is now available. If a library has broken runs of any given title, the researcher will be frustrated until he locates the gaps in some other library.

Restated by Peter VanWingen of Library of Congress:

> It would seem that the mot useful step towards creating some unity among pulp magazine collections would be a guide to these various collections. The Union List of Serials is helpful up to a point, but a guide to pulp magazine collections would give comprehensive coverage of locations and holdings of collections.

From Texas A&M University:

> A pulp union list might be helpful. Filming is essential (whether microfilm, videodisc or whatever) or pulps will become extinct. In fact, some already are. I suppose it is too much to expect a pop culture research center with a core collection of pulps in various genres.

And from Thomas Whitehead of Temple University:

> Identification of significant collections and agreement by libraries or commitment of individual libraries to maintain their collection or certain titles in the original with a commitment on expenditures for the state of the art preservation work.

From the above responses, one finds four suggestions: the microfilming of pulp magazines, a union-list for pulp titles, a center dedicated to research in the area of pulps and popular culture, and a cooperative effort by libraries to improve pulp collections. Would these suggestions work? Based on survey responses, the following conclusions were reached.

On the subject of microfilming pulps: this process has a number of proponents, and there are two good arguments for microfilming. First, a microfilm collection is easier to maintain. With microfilm copies, there is no problem involving the deteriorating condition of pulp paper, and microfilm copies are easier to store and take up less space. Second, microfilm copies can be made more accessible. Since microforms are not rare books, they do not need the special care reserved for pulps or other rare materials. "Microfilms of pulp magazines could be checked out by students and other users if they were available," states Mary Jo Walker of Eastern New Mexico University. They could also be photocopies, so that researchers could have copies of stories for use outside the library.

The argument against microfilming is very simple: cost. As Bill Blackbeard explained in his interview, "Suppose you're the University of Indiana, and you have no pulps. All of a sudden

you are going to spend eight or nine thousand dollars to buy the microfilm run of say Street and Smith pulp. Forget it! There is no way that any board of directors would approve that." Microfilm costs upward of ten to fifteen cents a page. Even cooperative efforts that allow libraries to share the expense would be costly. Given the limited budgets of special collections departments and the low priority of pulps in these budgets, microfilming is not a cost-effective option for most libraries. But those libraries interested in microfilm should remember that a number of pulps already exist on microfilm. Libraries who would prefer a microfilmed pulp collection over the real thing might want to obtain copies of existing microfilms rather than produce their own.

But there is an alternative to microfilm. Hilda Bohem of UCLA recommends pulp facsimiles, and at the present, is working with the San Francisco Academy of Comic Art to produce facsimiles of many of the pulps in their collection. Facsimiles allow the library to retire the fragile and heavily used issues and provides researchers a highly readable copy. Pulp facsimiles are also cheaper than microfilm. A pulp facsimile costs about twelve dollars while a microfilm copy is about twenty dollars. Plus facsimile production can be more selective. While it is almost unheard of to microfilm spot issues of a title and then not microfilm the rest of the run, it is quite accepted to produce facsimiles of spot issues and to store them along side originals. Facsimiles also allow libraries to purchase expensive pulps. Facsimiles of expensive pulps not in the collection can be purchased through the

San Francisco Academy of Comic Art at a fraction of the cost. By doing so, the collection could be more comprehensive. Though libraries do not have the money to buy large numbers or to convert whole collections to facsimiles, many libraries could afford one or two facsimiles a year as a means to make their pulp collections more accessible, to protect issues in dangerously bad condition and overall, to improve the collection.

On the subject of a union-list for pulps: a pulp union-list would be a valuable reference tool to those doing research in pulp magazines. It would help publicize pulp collections, get researchers and collections together, and increase interest in pulp special collections. If researchers knew what library pulp collections had they might use them more often. A union-list for science fiction pulps already exists in the Cogell article previously cited, but there is no union-list for pulps of other genres. A pulp union-list is not easily compiled. Since many libraries do not have time to catalog their collections, they are unable to provide detailed listings of their pulp holdings. Though they may be able to list the titles they have, they often are unable to offer information on which issues of these titles are available. As explained by George McWhorter of University of Louisville, 'This information (detailed bibliographic information) is not easily available. UCLA wrote me that their BLUE BOOK collection was inventoried by a visiting professor, rather than a librarian . . . which means that most librarians have neither the time nor the

inclination to take such inventories." Because heads of collections are often unable to help in compiling a record of their holdings, it is up to the pulp researcher to obtain the information. Since pulp researchers benefit most directly from a union-list, it is up to them to do the legwork to compile such a work. Since heads of collections are often unable to provide lists of pulp holdings, the researcher will have to use on-site inspections of collections as a means to obtaining accurate information.

On the subject of a pulp research center: one already exists. Though it gets little publicity, the San Francisco Academy of Comic Art was established to accomodate researchers in pulps and other popular narrative art forms. Heads of collections should look upon the Academy as a clearing house for information on pulp magazines and on ways to improve pulp collections. The Academy's photocopying and facsimile services are very helpful to both heads of collections and researchers. The Academy can also be helpful in aiding libraries and individuals in obtaining pulp reference materials.

On the subject of cooperative efforts as a means to improve service: Eleanor M. Gehres of the Denver Public Library said, "Cooperative action is . . . difficult to achieve, not because of a lack of willingness, but usually the absence of coordination." It would be nice if libraries could pool resources and obtain results, other wise unobtainable, but if cooperative efforts are to be successful, there must be someone to take the initiative

to coordinate these efforts. At the present, there are cooperative efforts underway. The University of Louisville, the San Francisco Academy of Comic Art, and UCLA are working together to establish a comprehensive collection of Black Mask, both facsimiles and originals at all three institutions. But such events are the exception. Few heads of collections have the time or interest for such efforts.

The suggestions listed above could have the impact on improving pulp special collections. But it is doubtful that the impact will ever be substantial as long as pulps are a low priority item. As McWhorter of University of Louisville explains: "Pulp collections can only improve and solidify as pulp scholarship increases . . . i.e., more serious publications extolling the virtues of the pulp writers and artists, so that libraries will be encouraged to rate them in a higher priority of importance to continuing research. Only then, I think, will libraries find the means to conserve pulps. When enough academic attention is focused on pulps, the money to preserve them will come." But the money at the present time is not there. Yet there are economical ways to improve pulp collections.

Donations are one of the major ways to improve a pulp collection at little cost to the library. Donations can help make a collection more comprehensive and can help a library replace pulps in bad condition. Also, duplicates in collections created through donations can inturn be donated to other needy special collections. Heads of collections should encourage donations. In his interview,

Bill Blackbeard pointed out, "One of the reasons universities don't get even donations that are around is because they will not put themselves out to do the simple matter of evaluating the donation." Heads of collections who wish to upgrade their pulp collection cannot turn their backs on donations.

Talk is also cheap. Communication between heads of collections about the problems in using and maintaining pulp collections can be an important step in improving collections. Heads of special collection departments that include a pulp collection must remember that they are not alone. The problems of preserving pulps and making them available to researchers are shared by all libraries with large numbers of original pulp magazines. Discussing these problems can help. Heads of other collections can be an important source of information. The San Francisco Academy of Comic Art is an example of a particularly good source of information. With phone number and address listed in the Directory of Special Libraries and Information Centers, the Academy can answer questions about the state of the art in pulp preservation, pulp reference materials, the production of facsimiles and microfilm, and about how to accomodate pulp researchers.

This study has not attempted to claim that those in charge of pulp collections have not met their responsibility. If the head of a collection has not done everything possible to make his pulps a useful resource to researchers, it is usually not because of a lack of desire, but instead, because of a lack of time and money. Most heads of special collections have matters

more pressing than their pulp collection, so quite often a library's pulp collection is neglected. The collection is maintained, but little is done to enhance it.

As long as pulps are a low priority item in research-oriented institutions, the future of pulp collections will be shaky. In commenting on this situation, George McWhorter of Louisville writes:

> Until the network of administrators receive proof that the pulps are important and worth saving, they will remain at the bottom of the totem pole of priorities. This is the situation as I perceive it. Like many collecting areas, the pulps need more vocal champions to attract the necessary publicity for their survival.

It is up to the pulp researcher and those interested in pulps to provide that proof. Through their use of pulp collections and feedback to heads of collections, those that use these collections have a chance to upgrade them. The pulp researcher also has an obligation to create the reference tools to make these collections more accessible. A pulp union-list is one reference tool that can work to unify library pulp collections and make them seem more like a network and less like a group of separate entities. If pulp researchers could revise the present union-list for science fiction pulps and create a union-list for other pulps, the task of finding pulps in collections would be made much easier. Pulp researchers play a large part in the future of pulp special collections. Their actions can motivate heads of collections to do more to make library pulp collections more comprehensive and easier to use.

Despite limited resources, the future of pulp special collections is not dim. Though steps like microfilming maybe too costly to be used at present, other measures like pulp facsiles are within

the price range of most libraries. But even without facsimiles, if originals are kept in a cool, dark storage area, they will maintain their condition for a long time. The problem of condition is often overrated. Pulp paper is not fragile; kept in reasonable conditions, it will prosper. Donations are another cost-effective way to improve a pulp collection. Donation can help make collections more comprehensive and can be used as a means to replace poor conditioned pulps. Heads of collections must take advantage of what resources they have. They must also remember that they are not alone -- other heads of special collections that include pulps face the same problems and are a good source of helpful information. If the interest in pulps continues to grow and if the pulps find more "vocal champions," the future of pulp special collections cannot help but be brighter. If this happens, maybe more comprehensive solutions to the problems facing pulp collections will be found.

Endnotes

[1]Bill Blackbeard, "The Pulps" in Handbook of American Popular Culture, edited by M. Thomas Inge (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978), p.196.

[2]Elizabeth Cummins Cogell, "Science Fiction and Fantasy Collections in U.S. and Canadian Libraries" in The Science Fiction Reference Book, edited by Marshall Tymn (San Berardino, Calif.: Borgo Press, 1983).

[3]Surveys were mailed to other institutions, but because of time limitations and other reasons, they were unable to respond.

[4]A.A. Wyn, "Pulp Magazines," The New York Times, 7 September 1935, p.14.

[5]Blackbeard, p.196.

[6]There were other specialized pulps before Detective Story Magazine, but DSM was the most significant of the early specialized pulps.

[7]Harold Hersey, "More About Wood Pulp," Bookman, November 1928, p.xxxiv.

[8]The Librarians' Glossary, compiled by Leonard Montague Harrod, 4th ed. (London: Andre Deutsch, 1977), p.773.

[9]Subject Collections, edited by Lee Ash, 3rd ed. (New York: R.R. Bowker, 1967), p.956.

[10]Blackbeard, p.214.

[11]Ibid.

[12]August Lenniger, "37 Magazines Buying Westerns," Writers Digest, November 1936, p.23, and Lurton Blassingame, "The Detective Fiction Market," Writers Digest, January 1937, p.13.

[13]Blackbeard, p.215.

[14]Ibid.

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